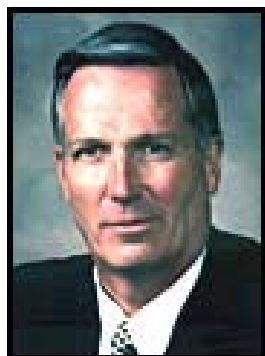


Information Link

A Source of Information for Our Customers



Curtis L. Wolfe
Chief Information
Officer, ITD

In this issue, I would like to elaborate on two initiatives that have seen significant activity since the last issue of *Information Link*. These two initiatives are the operation of the State Information Technology Advisory Committee (SITAC) and its focus on prioritization of major Information Technology (IT) projects for the next biennium and a desktop replacement study being conducted by a sub-committee of the Architecture Review Board (ARB) as a response to certain recommendations in the Pacific Technology, Inc., (PTI) legislative study.

In ITD's budget bill (1505) the legislature directed the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to work with SITAC to prioritize major projects and to submit this list to the Interim Information Technology Committee for its consideration regarding special legislation that supports implementation of some or all of these projects.

The process approved by SITAC is to prioritize major general funded projects (over \$250,000) as well as list non-general funded projects for all agencies and branches of government.

The ranking process will begin once the budgets and IT plans are submitted by agencies in July. This process will consider such issues as: return on investment, improved customer service, improved internal efficiencies, mandated requirements, operational necessity, enterprise benefit and a rating as to relative achievability. As indicated above, it is legislative intent to use this prioritization and ranking process to help determine which projects should be funded for the 2005-2007 biennium.

The PTI Study recommended state government move towards a standardized workstation with replacement cycles managed by ITD and tier 1 and tier 2 support provided by ITD. I asked that a sub-committee of the ARB be established to examine these two recommendations. This sub-committee has been studying these recommendations over the last two months and recently published their own recommendations.

Their recommendations included the following:

1. Prepare and execute a Request For Proposal (RFP) to begin aggregated single brand PC acquisition for the office automation PC.

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The PTI Study recommended state government move towards a standardized workstation with replacement cycles managed by ITD and tier 1 and tier 2 support provided by ITD.

2. Standardize the specifications for PCs to be used in state government.
3. Adopt a four-year replacement cycle for office automation PCs.
4. Continue to study how to best manage the replacement cycle process.
5. Continue to study the labor piece more thoroughly to determine the best way to manage these resources.

It is anticipated that 65 percent of state government desktops (approximately 5,000 PCs) would be purchased through a replacement standard. The rest of the PCs are high-end power user stations and laptops that would not necessarily be purchased through this procurement process. The RFP should be issued within the next 60 days. Other portions of the PTI Study will continue to be studied to determine the best implementation model.

I will continue to update you on these initiatives as well as others in future issues of *Information Link*.

New Work Management System Goes Live in May

Deborah Mosset

The reality of using a common work request system among North Dakota's state departments that is entirely web-based will soon be at our fingertips. The Information Technology Department (ITD) will release the new Work Management System (WMS) in May 2004.

For the past year, a team of ITD developers and a committee of information technology (IT) specialists from other departments have been developing a work request system to replace the systems currently used to-day. This includes the On-Line Work Request System (SilverStream), the 15-year-old mainframe-based WORK System, and the need to send paper requests to ITD for work to be performed. Users of this application will be able to go to one common place to request IT services performed by ITD, and other departments can use the WMS to request and manage IT work that is done internally by their own IT staff.



Tim Pfaff, DOT, and Chad Wolf, ITD, discuss the work process of the WMS during acceptance testing.

The WMS sports a new look and embraces versatility with key features consisting of Work Orders, Service Requests, My Work Queue, Project Management, and Assignments.

The Work Orders feature is the initial component that department staff will use when requesting work. It allows up to three levels of approval to accommodate the internal processes used within departments.

Service Requests are used to specify the detail of work being requested. This feature offers 32 different service requests, including Software Development, Telecommunications, Security, and Email requests. A department can have multiple service requests per work order.

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Users of the Work Management System will be able to go to one common place to request IT services performed by ITD, or departments can use the application internally to request IT work done by their own staff.

The service requests can be processed within the department or submitted to ITD for work to be performed.

My Work Queue displays a personalized view of an individual's work on WMS. This includes My Work Orders, the work orders initiated by the individual; My Assignments, service requests that an individual is assigned; and Project Management, action notifications for project management documents, such as action items, issues, and minutes.

Currently, ITD and other departments, including the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT), are testing the work processes of the WMS system to ensure a smooth transition from the old systems to the new application. In May, ITD will begin the Administrator training and will train key individuals from other departments who will then train their own staff on the new application. A full rollout of the WMS will occur when training is completed.

Future updates and tips on using the WMS will be posted on ITD's internet site.

Rate Changes

In February 2004, ITD upgraded the mainframe processor. Our benchmarks indicate the new processor is approximately 32 percent faster than the old processor and we have adjusted the rates accordingly.

	New Rate	Old Rate
IBM 9672 Batch CPU	\$.98 / sec	\$.67 / sec
IBM 9672 CICS CPU	\$.98 / sec	\$.67 / sec
IBM 9672 ADABAS CPU	\$ 1.03 / sec	\$.72 / sec
IBM 9672 TSO CPU	\$.98 / sec	\$.67 / sec

All of our service rates can be found on the ITD web site at <http://www.discoverND.com/itd/billing>. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dan Sipes by e-mail at dsipes@state.nd.us or by phone at 328-4317.

The Importance of Project Management

Jennifer Kunz, PMP

Getting a little tired of all the talk about project management? Or perhaps you are a project manager and feel a little misunderstood when you defend the principles of project management. The purpose of this article is to provide a common understanding of project management and answer your questions about why project management is so important.

Defining Project Management

Project management is about applying proven management practices to a project, just as you apply those practices to managing a particular government service/program or in managing your employees. Would you begin offering a service without someone to manage it? Would you just let a few employees work on it now and then, with no coordination or tracking of performance? Probably not. A formal definition for project management is "the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements."

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A formal definition for project management is "the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements."

When Should Project Management Practices Be Used?

Work generally involves either operations or projects. Although the two may overlap, they differ primarily in that operations are ongoing and repetitive while projects are temporary and unique. A formal definition of a project is "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service." Project management practices can be applied to all types of projects. We hear most frequently about project management on information technology projects, but other examples of projects include construction projects or meeting compliance with a new federal regulation.

What Are the Activities Involved in Project Management?

The primary activities of project management can be grouped into five major categories: initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing. Initiating activities involve authorizing resources and kicking off the project. Planning activities focus on the development of a project plan including the project scope, schedule, and budget. Executing activities involve the management of project work, and controlling activities ensure the work is managed to its requirements and objectives. Finally, when the project work is complete, there are closing activities such as formal acceptance by the customer and the documenting of lessons learned (what went right and what went wrong).

It is worth noting that when performing these activities, large or complex projects will require more comprehensive project management practices. This may include more formal procedures and documentation to ensure that the project meets all of its requirements and progress is communicated effectively.

Are All of These Project Management Activities Really Necessary?

"We don't have time to do project management or dedicate a project manager; we are too busy with the project!" Do you know someone who feels this way, or do you have this opinion yourself? Remember that project management is really about appointing someone to manage project activities instead of letting the activities manage you. The bottom line is that you will save time and money by using project management on your projects by "planning the work" and "working the plan."

Still unsure about project management or would like to know more? Visit the ITD Policy and Planning project management web page at <http://www.state.nd.us/itd/planning/proj.html>. Also refer to the Project Management Institute (PMI) at www.pmi.org and its PMBOK standard, which was used as a source for this article.

On the Job for ITD

Sharon Freeman, Information Management Analyst, has worked for ITD for 13 years. She has a bachelor's degree in Information Management from the University of North Dakota (UND).

Freeman assists agencies with the development and maintenance of comprehensive records and document management programs, audits existing records management programs, and audits and designs paper and electronic forms.



The best part of her job is, Freeman said, "Working with a variety of agencies and individuals to establish a records and forms management program."

In her spare time, Freeman enjoys scrapbooking and spending time with her family.



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IT Functional Consolidation Update

Lynette Goroski

As of March 15, 2004, consolidation was completed for 17 agencies, with several other migrations in progress. Overall progress of the project is favorable.

Various issues have been encountered throughout the migration process. These issues have been documented and are being used during the planning phase of subsequent migrations to ensure a smoother transition to the new environment.

Several automation methods have been established to speed up the migration process. Methods include migration tools like Secure Copy and Quest FastLane Migrator, and Visual Basic scripts that update workstation printers, join computers to the NDGOV domain remotely, and update SQL Server ODBC connections.

The IT Consolidation Steering Committee continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and review progress and upcoming activities. This committee consists of members from Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Architecture Review Board (ARB), and the Information Technology Department (ITD).

The monthly Consolidation Update/Discussion lunch meeting on the first Thursday of the month has been canceled. Developments regarding the IT Functional Consolidation project are updated regularly on ITD's web site. Please visit <http://www.state.nd.us/itd/consolidation/news.html> for the latest information.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Lynette Goroski at 328-2153 or lgoroski@state.nd.us.

In Case You Missed It - Jesper Anderson Web Cast

Jesper Anderson, Group Vice President and General Manager of PeopleSoft's Tools and Technology, spoke on the latest trends in technology at the IT Industry Trends Forum, sponsored by Enterprise Architecture, on March 3, 2004.

Highlights of Anderson's presentation included discussions on popular operating systems, databases, application servers and applications. He also talked about the initiatives Open Source, Linux, J2EE, and Microsoft.Net.

If you missed this event, you can still view the web cast at <http://www.state.nd.us/ea/forums/>.

